

1 What is claimed is:

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3 1. A method for locating objects enclosed in a medium, according to which a
4 detection signal is generated by at least one capacitive sensor device, the
5 detection signal penetrating the medium that is to be analyzed in such a way that
6 information is obtained about the objects that are enclosed in the medium by
7 evaluating the detection signal, particularly by measuring impedance,
8 wherein, to evaluate the detection signal, an algorithm is used that separates the
9 measured signal into signal parts originating from the enclosing medium and
10 signal parts originating from the object enclosed in the medium.

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12 2. The method as recited in Claim 1,
13 wherein, to determine the part of the signal that originates from the enclosing
14 medium, a model that has n parameters is used for the material of the enclosing
15 medium.

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17 3. The method as recited in Claim 2,
18 wherein the n parameters of the model for the enclosing medium are stored in
19 the form of a program map and are capable of being queried by an evaluation
20 algorithm.

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22 4. The method as recited in Claim 2 or 3,
23 wherein the parameters of the program map are obtained by performing n
24 reference measurements at defined impedances.

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26 5. The method as recited in Claim 4,
27 wherein at least one reference measurement is carried out on a known reference
28 material.

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30 6. The method as recited in Claim 4,

1 wherein at least one reference measurement is obtained by short-circuiting the
2 detection signal.

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4 7. The method as recited in one of the preceding Claims 2 through 6,
5 wherein, to determine the material of the enclosing medium, an interpolation of a
6 material value that is measured for the enclosing medium with the n parameter
7 values of the model is carried out, and the material of the enclosing medium is
8 approximately determined using a reference optimization.

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10 8. The method as recited in Claim 7,
11 wherein a value for the dielectric constants of the material forming the enclosing
12 medium is determined from the interpolation of a material value that is measured
13 for the enclosing medium with the n parameter values of the model.

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15 9. The method as recited in Claim 8,
16 wherein depth information about the object enclosed in the medium is obtained
17 by using the dielectric constants of the material of the enclosing medium that
18 were determined

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20 10. The method as recited in Claim 9,
21 wherein the depth information about the enclosed object is obtained using the
22 dielectric constants of the enclosing medium from a phase measurement of that
23 part of the measured signal that originates from the object enclosed in the
24 medium.

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26 11. The method as recited in one of the preceding Claims,
27 wherein the signal is measured and evaluated as a function of a lateral
28 displacement of the sensor device that is generating the detection signal.

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30 12. The method as recited in one of the preceding Claims,

1 wherein the signal is measured and evaluated as a function of more than one
2 measuring frequency.

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4 13. A measuring device, in particular a hand-held locating device for locating
5 objects enclosed in a medium, having a sensor device, with means for
6 generating a detection signal for the sensor device, a control and evaluation unit
7 for determining measured values from the detection signal, and an output device
8 for the determined measuring devices, for carrying out a method according to
9 one of the Claims 1 through 12.

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11 14. The measuring device as recited in Claim 13,
12 wherein the measuring device includes at least one internal calibration device for
13 a measured signal.

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15 15. The measuring device as recited in Claim 14,
16 wherein the calibration device enables measurement of at least one defined
17 impedance.

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19 16. The measuring device as recited in Claim 14 or 15,
20 wherein the calibration device includes a short-circuit switch for generating a
21 defined impedance.

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23 17. The measuring device as recited in Claim 14, 15 or 16,
24 wherein the measuring device includes switching means for temporary activation
25 of the calibration device.

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27 18. The measuring device as recited in one of the Claims 13 through 17,
28 wherein the measuring device includes means for saving material data, in
29 particular dielectric constants, of known materials.

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31 19. The measuring device as recited in one of the Claims 13 through 18,

1 wherein the measuring device includes means that permit calculated measured
2 results, in particular the position and/or depth of an object enclosed in a medium,
3 to be depicted in a spatially-resolved manner on a display device of the
4 measuring device.

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